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THE HARRISON ANTINARCOTIC LAW.

DECISIONS BY TWO UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURTS CONSTRUING SECTION 8.

Two decisions by United States courts construing section 8 of the Harrison Antinarcotic Law¹ have recently appeared. This section makes it unlawful for any person who has not registered and paid the tax under the law to have in his possession or under his control any of the habit-forming drugs named in the act, and such possession or control is made presumptive evidence of a violation of the act.

The United States District Court for the Western District of Washington took the view that Congress intended to prevent the importation, manufacture, or sale of habit-forming drugs except as allowed by the law, and that the law should be so construed as to carry out this intention.²

The same section was considered by the United States District Court for the State of Montana about the same time. Judge Bourquin decided that section 8 applies only to persons who are required to register under the law. In his opinion he says that mere consumers of the drugs "are not within section 1, and section 8 does not purport to extend the registration and taxation features of the act to them, or to any one, but only to make unlawful mere possession of the drugs by any person of the classes by section 1 required to register and pay, and who have not, and to create a statutory rule of evidence."

The opinion in the latter case is published in this issue of the Public Health Reports, page 3715.

MALARIAL FEVER.

RECENT APPEARANCE AT GALVESTON, TEX.

From a report by L. P. H. Bahrenburg, Surgeon, United States Public Health Service.

During the late summer and autumn of 1915 malarial fever was present in Galveston. This fact is of especial interest because cases of local genesis have heretofore been extremely rare, if indeed they have occurred at all within recent years.

¹ Public Health Reports, Feb. 19, 1915, p. 573; 38 Stat. L., 785.

² Public Health Reports, Dec. 10, 1915, pp. 3601, 3631.

It is asserted by those who have made a close study of the subject that prior to the Gulf coast storm of August 16 and 17, 1915, no cases of malaria occurred at Galveston except in persons who had acquired their infection on the mainland in Texas or other States. It was further asserted that no *Anophelinæ* were to be found upon Galveston Island, and the observations of the writer tally with that statement. It is stated by observers that immediately after the storm there was almost a total absence of mosquitoes, this condition lasting about a week or 10 days; longer, according to others. Mosquitoes in considerable number reappeared later and have since been continuously present. The great majority of these mosquitoes are *Culicinæ*, only a few *Anophelinæ* having been found, although this may be due to lack of competent observation.

The bayous of Galveston Bay and the tributary creeks have long had a bad reputation as malarial districts; the contiguous mainland has, therefore, developed many cases of that disease. As the wind during the early part of the last storm blew from northerly points of the compass toward the city, it appears probable that infected mosquitoes were blown there, some of them falling into shelters, where they remained after the wind veered and while the city was partially submerged. It has been contended that *Anophelines* could not find proper breeding places on the island, but this assertion must be regarded with some doubt for the present, as it seems unlikely that the insects blown to Galveston in August could still be the active infecting agents.

Since the date above mentioned, however, a noteworthy number of cases of severe malarial infections have been met with, which in many cases were of the pernicious type and in persons who had not been on the mainland. Malaria is not a reportable disease, and it has not been possible to secure figures giving reliable data as to the actual number of cases. One physician, however, who has an extensive private and consultation practice, informed the writer that he had seen 25 cases during October and November, 1915, and that microscopical examinations of the blood showed the presence of the estivo-autumnal parasite.

PUBLIC HEALTH ADMINISTRATION IN NORTH DAKOTA.

By CARROLL FOX, Surgeon, United States Public Health Service.

The following report gives the results of a study of public health administration and organization in North Dakota, carried on throughout a period of about seven weeks, beginning September 17, 1915.

The State of North Dakota has an area of approximately 70,195 square miles and, according to the State census of 1915, a population